THE SHAKESPEARE ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

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All correspondence relating to the conduct of the BULLETIN should be addressed to Dr. Samuel A. Tannenbaum, 601 West 113th Street, New York, N. Y.

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THE HARDBOILED SHAKSPERE

By WILLIAM T. HASTINGS

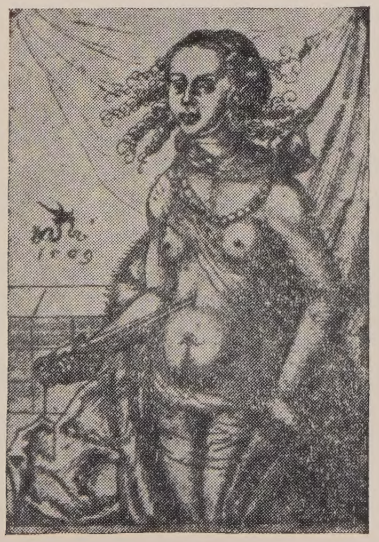
I.

"HE was not of an age, but for all time," though truer than Ben Jonson knew, is less true than the 19th century supposed. The modern student of Shakspere has still to combat many tenaciously held judgments based upon too purely an æsthetic-moral approach. Notably this is true in regard to *Titus Andronicus,* still widely repudiated by the critics. "Scarcely anyone," said John Bailey in 1929, "thinks Shakespeare wrote it . . . In style and manner, in its whole ethical atmosphere, this drama of horrors . . . is utterly unlike all we know of Shakespeare."[1] Mark Van Doren has to explain it as a parody.[2] Yet assuming, if you will, Shakspere's authorship,[3] analysis of the play is singularly rewarding to the student of the Renaissance—the more so perhaps because of its "unShaksperian" character.

Blood, as Poe might have said, is its avatar and its seal—the redness and the horror of blood. Out of nineteen named characters only five survive; and the deaths of all are violent. The mental and spiritual violences are more terrible than the deaths: Tamora in Act I pleading in vain for the life of her son Alarbus, and in Act V learning she has eaten of her sons Demetrius and Chiron; Lavinia witnessing the murder of Bassianus, suffering rape and mutilation—but there is no need to go on. The usual explanation is simple: this is a play catering to the tastes of a bloody-minded populace, fed on bear and bull baitings, cock fightings, hangings and quarterings; in a time when nobility and royalty had perfected the etiquette of going to the block with calm detachment, bestowing largesses upon gaoler and executioner and philosophic farewell speeches upon the appreciative mob. Supporting parallels in other plays are easy to accumulate, such as—to cite only one—the subjection in full stage of Sir Thomas Sherley to the torture of the rack, his

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

THE SPANISH TRAGEDY



LUCRECE

cry of pain and his obstinate refusal (like a true-born Englishman) to "tell all," and the savage command of the Great Turk: "Wrinch him again!"[4]

Yet this explanation is too simple, and is imperfectly historical. The Renaissance had no corner on blood and horrors, as is proved by the amiable activities of Boris Karloff and by the luscious massacres in *Northwest Passage* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Shakspere elsewhere, in plays no one wishes to repudiate, has horrors to spare. For the clue to the problem of *Titus Andronicus* one must look more closely at its age—and at the age of its author. Aside from questions of dramatic technique and the well-known influence upon subject and technique of the Senecan tradition in general and *The Spanish Tragedy* in particular, two aspects of the play seem significant: (1) the conventions of character pattern and action, and (2) the author's personal attitude toward his materials.

II.

The Renaissance was half medieval and half modern. It was childish and it was precociously mature: it was credulous and skeptical, revolutionary and conventional, violent and tender. It loved a fairy-tale excess of suffering and reward, as in the history of Griselda. It thought, like the Middle Ages, that symmetry was evidence of truth; hence its retention of the three cardinal virtues, the seven deadly sins, the nine Worthies. It liked categories and classifications; and yet it delighted in the individual and the eccentric. It translated the past into the present, and imagined the present indefinitely projected into the future. The great paradox of death and immortality was its most living truth.

In Elizabethan plays the treatment of characterization reflects the conflict imperfectly outlined above. There is, on the one hand, a strong tendency to observe conventions in character portrayal, to deal in types. The tendency is the stronger because of the merging of two streams of influence, foreign and native: the type figures of classical comedy and tragedy and their Italian descendants, and the theological or secular abstractions of the English moral

plays. In behavior such a character tends to conform strictly to the pattern of his type—the more perfectly, the more credible; hence, the 100%-ness, the excess,—the incredibility, in our modern view. He observes perfectly or violates completely the code of his class—the lover, the man of honor, the avenger, the coward, the Machiavel. There is, on the other hand, an intermittent rise of interest in and emphasis on the individual, which is partly a transfer from the psychology of humors, partly the fundamental English love of "originals," and partly the stimulus to the spirit of man through enfranchisement from intellectual bonds.

With most writers of Shakspere's time the type triumphs, even in realistic comedy. Shakspere, too, begins with types, though almost from the first there are traces of his instinctive tendency to add those homely or intimate touches which serve to separate the individual from his type and to reveal him as himself. Biron is not mere courtier, Launce not mere clown, Henry VI not mere royal weakling, Richard Crookback not mere Machiavel. Illustration of this could be drawn even from *Titus Andronicus,* but here the convention, the type, prevails too emphatically for the unoriented modern to be at ease. For him a set of incredible monsters move savagely to their melodramatic ends. The trouble with the modern is that he doesn't know the rules, the conventions, of this game.

Titus Andronicus, I would maintain, is tragedy (even though tragedy on a low plane), since the characters are intelligible, have an adequately defined motivation, and act consistently in accordance with the definition provided. The difficulty for the moderns is this: they have invoked modern standards of the rational, a modern psychology of character, and a modern morality. The world of the play is a Renaissance world without nuances, a world of black and white, of extremes (whitest chastity and blackest lust, supreme love and supreme hate); the moral code is that of complete self-sacrifice, of intense devotion, of unlimited revenge. It may be said that this simplification is a falsification of life; but a great art may employ such simplification: it is used by Racine as well as by Zane Grey. And it took

the Shakspere of *Hamlet* and *Lear* to teach (if he did teach) the Elizabethan age a higher and subtler reality.

Consider the protagonist, Titus Andronicus. Let us grant, for good or ill, his heroic proportions, his grandiloquence of action and speech. He is usually thought an absurd mouther, wholly unreal from his first entrance to his death. But to the Elizabethans he was perfectly logical, and therefore indubitably real: a thoroughly Renaissance conception, the superlative general and patriot, supremely loyal. This brings into line his pomp of entrance, his refusal of the crown and its bestowal on the less worthy but elder Prince Saturninus, his granting of Lavinia to the same prince against her wishes, his slaying of his son Mutius, and so on. The antagonizing of Tamora by the sacrifice of Alarbus, his requiem over the dead, and his defence of Saturninus against sedition are of a piece with his detached loftiness of unselfish devotion. Then when the evidence of his misplaced loyalty is unmistakably presented to him (in the heads of his sons and his own hand severed in vain to buy their lives) and the outrage to Lavinia is likewise brought home to the reigning house, the logical reaction (for the Elizabethans) is to the opposite extreme of supreme hatred and the seeking of titanic revenge. The conventions of the revenge drama are naturally invoked, and the old stories of Tereus and Philomela, of Appius and Virginia, provide their aid. Where is the flaw?

Or consider Tamora, the great prize of Titus's conquest, the outstanding figure in his triumphal procession. Turn your imaginations upon this tawny Queen of the Goths, a creature regal and passionate, broad-breasted, high-colored, golden-maned; confident, in the plenitude of her matured charms, of swaying all men; ensnaring the adolescent Saturninus while his lips are still wilfully demanding Lavinia, temporarily imposing upon Titus, carrying on the while her long-standing intrigue with Aaron the Moor. To her sense of power add ruthlessness and passion, and a compulsion to revenge herself upon Titus and his whole race for the horrid slaughter of her son ("Hew his limbs until they be consumed"); and you have complete motivation already in the first scene of the play for all her later acts. Out of

her hatred and passion, with the amused collaboration of the Moor, spring all the woes of Titus and Lavinia, Bassianus, and the sons of Titus.

Or, finally, and briefly, consider Aaron the Moor, a creature purely wicked, like Iago, and lacking the simple and natural motivation of Othello's ancient. An impossible monster, it is said. But see how clearly he is drawn, and how consistent his behavior. Proud of his liaison with the white queen, exulting in his capacity for engineering wicked plots, not reserved like Iago but voluble in crisis, overflowing with vitality, there can be no doubt that Shakspere drew him with delight, even with glee—the happiest touch of all being the scene of paternal and racial gloating over his and Tamora's black child.

If one accepts the conventions on which these characters are based, the suspension (in their plane of being) of our ordinary moral sanctions, and the elimination of all but raw colors in the painting, there is no flaw in the tragic concatenation. Mere violence cannot bar it as tragedy.

III.

But more distressing than the unplausible behavior of type characters is the mood of the play. Shakspere has given us many deaths and horrors, but they do not shock us thus. What is the explanation?

For our purpose we may attempt to discriminate three contrasting modes of feeling on the part of the artist toward the pageant of life and death: the naïve, the mature sophisticate, the mature sympathetic.

The red devils in the windows of the church at Fairford[5] thrusting down the damned with their forks, and many similar motifs in the stonework of the cathedrals, are examples of the naïve in art. So is the description of the experience of the faithless lady of Old Robin of Portingale, whose husband has been beforehand with her lover:

> Upp then came that ladie light
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And the first thinge that this ladye stumbled upon

Was of Sir Gyles his ffoote;
Sayes, Ever alacke, and woe is me,
Here lyes my sweete hart-roote!

And the second thing that this ladie stumbled on
Was of Sir Gyles his head;
Sayes, Ever alacke, and woe is me,
Heere lyes my true-love deade!

. . . . . .

Hee cutt the papps beside her brest,
And bad her wish her will;
And he cutt the eares beside her heade,
And bad her wish on still.[6]

Naïve is the mood of the old religious drama from the comic embarrassment of the Third Shepherd, who for a "presand that may please" the Christ Child has only a horn spoon, to the ferocity of Herod's soldiers spitting the Innocents on their spears. Naïveté survives in the popular drama of the Elizabethan age, even as late as George Peele's *Edward I* (c. 1590); witness the wicked Queen Eleanor's treatment of the Mayoress of London, and the later calamities of Eleanor herself.

More pertinent to our problem is the sophisticated or hardboiled mood. Not to mention Apuleius, Petronius, Plautus and Terence and their early Renaissance disciples, one may point to such a piece of graphic art as The Knave on a fifteenth-century playing card from whose fist a helpless duck dangles by the neck,[7] or Lucas Cranach the Elder's numerous studies of Lucrece and her self-immolating dagger.[8] Sophistication shows itself full-fledged in English drama of the 1580's and 90's; for example, in the gratuitous murders committed by King Cambises, who shoots the child of Praxaspes with bow and arrow, and presents the arrow-cleft heart to the sorrowing father, who gives the command

Dispatch with sword this judges life: extinguish fear and cares:
So doon, draw thou his cursed skin strait over both his eares.
I will see the office done, and that before mine eyes;

and who finds his appetite for blood thus merely whetted. Among scores of other instances, readers of Marlowe will recall the deaths of King Bajazet and his queen Zabina, who brain themselves against the bars of the cage in which Bajazet is transported on Tamburlaine's military expedi-

tions. Sophistication dominates the comedy of the Restoration, and in modern dress confronts us in Oscar Wilde's *Salome,* and Faulkner's *Sanctuary,* in much of Hemingway, Cain, O'Hara, and Coward, and in the drawings of Beardsley, Rockwell Kent, and Eric Gill. Its essence is an attitude of disillusioned amusement or "artistic" detachment in the portrayal of man's comic or tragic destiny.

The third mood is the sympathetic, the "gentle," the "Shaksperian":

> The picture that thou here seest put
> It was for gentle Shakespeare cut.

It is a truism that the "normal" reaction of Shakspere both in comedy and in tragedy was kindly, humorous, sympathetic; that he had an infinite gift of compassion and belief in the dignity of man. The contrast between his mood and Marlowe's is sharply defined by their respective handlings of the stock situation of the fate of a town which does not instantly surrender to a conqueror (the ghosts of Warsaw and Rotterdam take notice). In *Tamburlaine* the Governor of Damascus does not surrender when Tamburlaine's "tents of white" are pitched before the town; then, failing of help from the Soldan, he sends virgins with laurel wreaths to the camp over which the "coal-black colours" are now flying, beseeching Tamburlaine to "pity poor Damascus! Pity old age . . . Pity the marriage bed . . . infants . . . The prostrate service of this wretched town." But Tamburlaine's mind knows no ruth:

> Could they not as well
> Have sent ye out when first my milk-white flags . . .
> As now when fury and incensëd hate
> Flings slaughtering terror from my coal-black
> tents . . .

He brutally orders the virgins to be led out and run through by his horsemen's spears, and their "slaughtered carcasses" to be hoisted up on the walls of the town, as a prelude to the general sack and rape. With what refined delicacy of sentiment, in contrast, does Shakspere's King Henry V warn the citizens of Harfleur of their fate should the town be taken by storm:

> What is't to me, when you yourselves are cause,
> If your pure maidens fall into the hand

> Of hot and forcing violation?
> What rein can hold licentious wickedness
> When down the hill he holds his fierce career?
> We may as bootless spend our vain command
> Upon th' enragëd soldiers in their spoil
> As send precepts to the leviathan
> To come ashore.

The same situation, the same convention of the laws of war, but a world of difference in moral atmosphere (even if we admit its speciousness).

Again, compare Act V of *Othello* (—"It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul!"—"Naught I did in hate but all in honour."—"This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon, For he was great of heart."—) with the bedchamber murder of the corrupt king by his dissembling mistress Evadne in *The Maid's Tragedy;* with its mental torture, its obscene gloating, its facile sermonizing wholly incompetent to relate this private vengeance to a moral order.

And finally, as the pervasive Shaksperian touch, observe how the horror of the blinding of Gloucester—"Out, vile jelly!"—is mitigated and the moral equilibrium is restored when one servant dies for his master and the comment of others concludes the scene:

> *2. Serv.* I'll never care what wickedness I do,
> If this man come to good.
> *3. Serv.* If she live long
> And in the end meet the old course of death,
> Women will all turn monsters.

Shakspere could not be naïve; he is usually compassionate; but it is a mistake to assume that he could not or would not be hardboiled. Nothing is clearer than his early delight in virtuosity in language; why not at least a momentary delight in playing the virtuoso, in striking the bravura note, with situations? In a day of literary shockers, poetic and dramatic—when a group of young sophisticates headed by Southampton, Dorset, and Essex patronized playwrights and poets—why not try his hand at a super-shocker or two?

Actually, in his 1590-94 period we find other evidences of his yielding to this temptation. I need only mention the death of young Rutland, and Queen Margaret ("She-wolf

of France, and worse than wolves of France") taunting his father York with the handkerchief dipped in Rutland's blood; the diabolical cleverness of the scene of the trial of Joan of Arc; the murders of Henry VI and the Duke of Clarence; and, on another plane, the comic brutality of *The Taming of the Shrew.* There is a close parallel, usually overlooked, between such scenes and the two poems *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece:* "a couple of ice-houses," said Hazlitt. "They are about as hard, as glittering, and as cold."[9] Sentimentalists, who have called *Lucrece* a moral poem written penitentially to compensate for the slander of womanhood in *Venus and Adonis,* have missed the purely artful and unfeeling character of the whole poem, as in the lines describing the lady's suicide (*vide* Cranach's drawing):

> Even here she sheathëd in her harmless breast
> A harmful knife . . . .
> And from the purple fountain Brutus drew
> The murderous knife, and, as it left the place,
> Her blood, in poor revenge, held it in chase;
>
> And bubbling from her breast, it doth divide
> In two slow rivers, that the crimson blood
> Circles her body in on every side,
> Who, like a late-sack'd island, vastly stood
> Bare and unpeopled in this fearful flood.
> Some of her blood still pure and red remain'd,
> And some look'd black, and that false Tarquin
> stain'd.[10]

I venture a second illustration, from *Venus and Adonis.* The *dêbat,* or debate, is of course one of the more popular literary conventions of the Middle Ages, and there can be no doubt that in Shakspere's day its form still pleased. In *The Nut-brown Maid,* in such duets as "Come live with me and be my love," and in the verbal battle-pieces of the chronicle plays (in which kings and generals slang each other down stage and then retire to an Agincourt or Philippi in the tiring rooms) it is still recognizable. A debate is one of the numerous survivals of medieval literary conventions in Shakspere's two poems. One is introduced at a critical point in *Venus and Adonis.* At mention of "the boar" Venus nearly swoons,

> And on his neck her yoking arms she throws:
> She sinketh down, still hanging by his neck,
> He on her belly falls, she on her back."

There follow, as every schoolboy knows, some witty verses on the general subject of leading a horse to water. And then we pass to a dialogue between the two which rapidly develops into a debate on love, lust, and "increase." The more innocent of modern readers may forget the pose of the two debaters—the many citations by critics of the picture of poor Wat the hare never allude to his context—but we can be sure that for Shakspere and his courtly readers therein lay the special savor of the passage, than which it would be difficult to imagine anything more hardboiled.

Titus Andronicus, like *3 Henry VI, Richard III, The Taming of the Shrew,* and the two poems, belongs to the period 1592-94. Put together out of familiar horror stories of the past, it moves from its bloody opening to its bloodier climax with resilient power and complete ruthlessness. There is wilfulness, hatred, gloating, and anguish, with occasional moments of such softer emotions as pride and love and despair; but there is essentially no compassion. The villain is a humorist, drawn by one who smiled amusedly as he laid on his strokes. There is grand theater in the striking pageant of the scenes. How they stand out: Saturninus and Bassianus squabbling for the crown in Act I, the pomp of Titus's return with his train of captives, the death of Alarbus, the death of Mutius, the elopement, the peace-making with the muttered threats of Tamora aside; in Act II the idyllic forest sheltering love, tauntings, murder, rape, and mutilation, while

> the morn is bright and grey,
> The fields are fragrant, and the woods are green:
> . . . . . .
> The birds chant melody on every bush,
> The snake lies rollëd in the cheerful sun;
> The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,
> And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground . . .;

in III, i, the exit of Marcus and the mutilated Titus and Lavinia, Titus and Marcus each bearing aloft the head of one of Titus's dead sons, and Lavinia the lopped hand of

Titus between her teeth; and so on to the retributory bloodletting, the Thyestian pasty-eating, and final stabbings in the supper room of Act V. The hard brilliance of the poems is equalled or surpassed here. Only today, after a new age of sophistication, can the calculated effect of this tragedy be realized. Imagine black-and-whites of these scenes by Aubrey Beardsley or Rockwell Kent, and my point will be driven home.

As a matter of fact, if *Titus Andronicus* were not hidden away under the mantle of the gentle Shakspere, a disgraceful and repudiated thing, but stood up in its own rights as an anonymous revenge play following the plot and character conventions of the age, it would be hailed as the perfect example of Renaissance sophisticated brutality; and the comparative puerility of *The Spanish Tragedy, The Jew of Malta,* and other members of the class would be at once obvious.

A recent essay on the text and authorship of the play bears the sub-title "Shakespeare at Thirty."[11] Shakspere's genius at thirty is not to be defined by so specialized an achievement as *Titus Andronicus;* but in it is clearly exhibited (besides these Renaissance traits with which we have been concerned) that fertility, zest, and power which within these same two years and another two were to give us not only Richard and Aaron, but Bottom, Mercutio, Juliet's nurse, Faulconbridge, and Shylock. It is a fine example of youthful power unleashed, even if taking a wayward direction alien to that of its later happy development.

Brown University,
Providence, R. I.

[9]See Hazlitt's whole essay for an elaboration of this point; *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (Everyman's Library edn.), p. 263.

[10]Lines 1723-43.

[11]J. S. G. Golton, "Titus Andronicus'; Shakespeare at Thirty," *S. P.,* April, 1933. —*Cf.* the naïve parallel:

And syn cam out the thick, thick blood,
And syn cam out the thin;
And syn came out the bonny heart's blood;
There was na more within.

SPENSERIAN 'COURTESY' AND TEMPERANCE IN *MUCH ADO* (*Concluded*)

By Abbie Findlay Potts

III.

TWO KNIGHTS OF COURTESY: CLAUDIO AND CALIDORE

Claudio a knight of courtesy? And yet is courtesy a trait not obviously perverted rather than lacking in him? Is his struggle against scandal not somewhat like Calidore's fight with the Blatant Beast? To Don John he seems 'The most exquisite Claudio.' The Messenger's announcement of success in battle represents him doing 'in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion,' as did Calidore:

> In whom it seemes, that gentleness of spright
> And manners mylde were planted naturall; . . .
> Nathlesse thereto he was full stout and tall,
> And well approv'd in batteilous affray.[31]

Claudio visits Leonato, the father of a fair daughter, Hero; Calidore visits Meliboe, the reputed father of a fair daughter, Pastorella. Leonato's paternity is jokingly challenged; Meliboe is not the real father of Pastorella. Leonato's guests apologize for burdening his hospitality—'You embrace your *charge* too willingly'; Calidore fears that the burden of so bold a guest shall *'chargefull'* be.[32]

After that first scene of wordless admiration Claudio asks Benedick:

> 'Didst note the daughter of Signor Leonato?' Likewise Calidore was
> unwares surprisd in subtile bands
> Of the blynd boy . . .
> Caught like the bird, which gazing still on others stands.
> So stood he still long gazing thereupon,
> Ne any will had thence to move away,
> Although his quest were farree afore him gone.[33]

Claudio begs Benedick to tell him *'truly'* 'in sober judgment' how he likes Hero: 'Is she not a *modest* young lady,' Benedick gives him his *'simple true* judgment.' Calidore, who

loathed leasing and base flattery,
And loved *simple truth* and stedfast honesty,

is justified by Spenser's account of Pastorella:

And soothly sure she was full fayre of face,
And perfectly well shapt in every lim,
Which she did more augment with *modest* grace,
And comely carriage of her count'nance trim.[34]

'Can the world buy such a jewel?' asks Claudio. The merchants offer 'store of gold' for Pastorella, who is 'like a Diamond of rich regard.' Both Claudio and Calidore surrender war-thoughts for soft and delicate desires.

Just at this point the ways of Claudio and Calidore seem likely to part in our literary analogy. Claudio's jealousy and intemperance become evident, and from these flaws Calidore is free. Nevertheless some of the traits of Calidore's jealous rival, Coridon, are present in Claudio, and the scenes of revelry in the Book of Courtesy and in *Much Ado* run parallel. Calidore dances with Pastorella, Coridon bites his lip; but Calidore courteously yields to Coridon and places Pastorella's flowery garland on Coridon, whereupon 'Coridon woxe frollicke, that earst seemed dead.' Don Pedro dances with Hero, Claudio sulks; Don Pedro, however, graciously restores Hero to Claudio after some scoffs from Benedick about willow garlands for a discarded swain; then Claudio is joyful. Beatrice's taunt about Claudio's civility—the trait of a courteous knight—also occurs during the first jealous seizure. He is 'neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.' Perhaps Beatrice knew that it is the function of the three Graces to

teach us, how to each degree and kynde
We should our selves demeane, to low, to hie;
To friends, to foes, which skill men call Civility;[35]

her demeanor toward Don Pedro is jokingly civil: 'Hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? . . . Your Grace is too costly to wear every day. But I beseech your Grace, pardon me . . . By your Grace's pardon.' These remarks with Leonato's pun ('His Grace hath made the match, and

all grace say Amen to it.') are reminiscent of the lines in Spenser close by the stanza on Civility and the Three Graces:

> For which the Graces that here wont to dwell,
> Have . . . graced her so much to be another Grace.
> Andother Grace she well deserves to be
> In whom so many Graces gathered are.[36]

It is during Claudio's first jealous seizure, too, that the resemblance becomes apparent between the intrigue of *Much Ado* and the Spenserian story of the intemperate Phedon. Phedon's friend, Philemon, persuades a handmaid, Pryene, to array herself in the clothes of her mistress, Claribell, who is the betrothed of Pedon. Then Pedon is abused with false evidence of Claribell's unchastity. He slays Claribell, poisons Philemon, and pursues Pryene to kill her. From the time of Langbaine, 1691, until Professor Thaler's recent study[37] this Spenserian episode has been debated as one source of *Much Ado;* to the evidence should be added the name taken by the disguised Don Pedro: 'My visor is Philemon's roof.' This speech would naturally be glossed by reference to the story of Baucis and Philemon; under the circumstances, however, the Spenserian Philemon has additional propriety in *Much Ado.*

Indeed, Claudio is transformed into a Phedon-like furious and intemperate character by the operation of forces well-known to the student of Spenser's lovers. When he says

> Let every eye negotiate for itself
> And trust no agent,

and when Benedick exclaims over him: 'Alas, poor hurt fowl! now will he creep into the sedges!' we recall Doubt, in the Mask of Cupid, who

> lookt askew with his mistrustfull eyes . . .
> And on a broken reed he still did stay
> His feeble steps, which shrunke, when hard thereon he lay.

Phedon was impatient for the rites which marriage make, 'that day too far did seeme'; 'time goes on crutches,' says Claudio, 'till love have all his rites.' Neither Phedon nor Claudio can keep his own counsel; and the Spenserian Furor, like Claudio, in rage

strooke more often *wide*
Than at the aymed marke, which he had eide:
And oft himselfe he chaunst to hurt unwares,
Whilst reason blent through passion, nought descride,
But as a blindfold Bull at random fares,
And where he hits, nought knowes, and whom he hurts,
nought cares.[38]

Hero refers to Claudio's insults in this figure: 'Is my lord well that he doth speak so wide?' Benedick reproves him for the same fault: 'So they sell bullocks . . . Ho! now you strike like the blind man. 'T was the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.' The temperate Guyon himself needed the help of reason.

When strong passion of weak fleshlinesse
Would from the right way seeke to draw him wide.

If Guyon erred; if the loving Scudamour believed the worst of his lady Amoret, when Ate reported her falsely; if the holy St. George 'burnt with gealous fire,' and his 'eye of reason was with rage yblent,' if he too would have slain his lady in his 'furious ire,' all knights beware! Only in the 'antique age' before 'faire grew foule, and foule grew faire in sight' might one trust one's lady. Thus much may be said to mitigate our scorn of Claudio.

IV.

TWO VAINGLORIOUS KNIGHTS: BENEDICK AND BRAGGADOCHIO

Scarcely more usual than Claudio as a knight of Courtesy would be the comparison of Benedick to the vainglorious coward knight. Yet in this guise he is humorously represented by Beatrice to the Messenger; and his own friends, Don Pedro and Claudio, say that he avoids quarrels with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear. In act 4, chiefly, Beatrice drives Benedick to challenge Claudio by the most outrageous insults: 'It is a man's office, but not yours!' 'Oh that I were a man!' 'O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake!' The attempted flight of Beatrice from Benedick when he has met her charge of unmanliness with offers of love may be compared with the

flight of Belphoebe from Braggadochio under the same circumstances. Claudio's jeering answer to Benedick's challenge when it is given—'He hath bid me to a calf's head and a capon'—suits Braggadochio's 'capon's courage.' The wise horse of Guyon bearing the foolish Braggadochio—

> He had not trayned been in chevalree,
> Which well that valiant courser did discerne—[39]

gives point to Beatrice's scoff on Benedick as having only wit enough to bear as a difference between himself and his horse. Braggadochio's 'pleasing vaine of glory aine' and 'flowing toung' are recognizable in Benedick. And the fate of Spenser's boaster, a shaven beard and the jests and jibes of all, is matched by the jests and jibes of Don Pedro and Claudio at the newly shaven lover, Benedick.

Undoubtedly the most striking analogy between the two boasters appears when each shrouds himself in the forest green and creeps into a bush.[40] 'I will hide me in the arbour,' says Benedick; there he lurks while the jokers play their prank. 'Stalk on, stalk on,' whispers Claudio, 'the fowl sits.' Emerging later to reestablish himself in his own esteem, Benedick presents exactly the picture of Braggadochio:

> As fearful fowle . . .
> Seeing at last her selfe from daunger rid,
> Peepes foorth, and soone renewes her native pride;
> She gins her feathers foule disfigurëd
> Proudly to prune, and set on every side,
> So shakes off shame, ne thinks how erst she did her hide.[41]

This prank whereby Benedick is cozened into a lover follows the general order of the early part of Spenser's *Mask of Cupid*. When Don Pedro and Claudio enter, Benedick exclaims 'Ha! the Prince and Monsieur Love.' Then, while the evening 'is hushed on purpose to grace harmony' (Claudio), as in the Mask there issues a 'joyous fellowship of minstrels, making goodly merriment (Balthasar and the musicians, to joke of 'notes' and 'nothing'),

> The whiles a most delitious harmony,
> In full straunge notes was sweetly heard to sound.[42]

Cupid's prologue, 'a grave personage' with 'count'nance

sage' by his 'lively actions . . . gan bewray Some argument of matter passioned.' Likewise Leonato, 'the white-bearded fellow,' gives weight to the prank; Benedick cannot think it a gull when Leonato says of Beatrice 'There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.'

The first figure in the *Mask of Cupid* is Fancy, like a lovely boy.[43] Beside him marches amorous Desire. Behind these two come Doubt and Danger. We have already noted the kinship of Doubt with Claudio, of Danger with Don John; Spenser's Fancy with his garment of 'painted plumes' and Spenser's Desire whose 'garment was disguised very vaine' and whose 'embroidered Bonet sat awry' help to explain Shakspere's Benedick: 'There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises.' 'When was he wont to paint himself?' his tormentors ask. 'A brushes his hat o' mornings; what should that bode?'

Benedick is not only a disdainful braggart and a fanciful lover. Although at first he disdains love, he does not lack the nobler traits of knighthood when finally he emerges from his comic prepossession. In this regard he is another Prince Arthur:

> That idle name of love, and lovers life,
> As losse of time, and vertues enimy
> I ever scorn'd, and ioyd to stirre up strife,
> In middest of their mournfull Tragedy,
> Ay wont to laugh, when them I heard to cry.[44]

As Prince Arthur defended the aged Reason against the taunts of Cymochles and Pyrochles,[44a] so Benedick arrives to rebuke Don Pedro and Claudio for their behaviour to Leonato. And the reverberant joke on Benedick as the 'Savage Bull' echoes from the simile applied not only to Disdain but to Arthur himself when he conquered Cymochles and Pyrochles:

> As salvage Bull, whom two fierce mastives bayt, . . .
> . . . with his dreadfull hornes them drives afore, . . .
> So rag'd Prince *Arthur* twixt his foemen twaine.[45]

Prince Arthur met his Queene of Faeries; Benedick found his woman of all graces. Prince Arthur overcame Disdain and Scorn

> As when a sturdy ploughman with his hynde
> By strength have overthrowne a stubborne steare,
> They downe him hold, and fast with cords do bynde,
> Till they him force the buxome yoke to beare.[46]

Not less surely does Don Pedro's prophecy for Benedick come true: 'In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.'[47]

Thus Shaksperian agents might have emerged from Spenserian allegories—if Shakspere read *The Faerie Queene* before he wrote *Much Ado About Nothing*. Our literary guest of disdainful ladyship and discourteous and vainglorious knighthood, of injustice and intemperance, while it relates the heroes and heroines of *Much Ado* to Mirabella, Braggadochio, Serena, and Phedon, permits them also to claim relationship with Belphoebe and Britomart, Arthur, Una, Guyon and Calidore, the nobler representatives of chivalric habit. Deformed has little value in drama unless behind him shines the Form.

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[31]*F. Q.*, 6. 1. 2. 2-3, 7-8.

[31²]*F. Q.* 6. 9. 14. 1 (of Meliboe):

[31*a*] *F. Q.* 6. 9. 14.1 (of Meliboe):

> He was to weet by common voice esteemed
> The father of the fayrest *Pastorell.*

Don Pedro in *Much Ado:*

> I think this is your daughter.

Leonato: Her mother hath many times told me so.

F. Q. 6. 12. 22. 1-4 (Pastorella's true mother to her true father):

> Thence running forth unto her true father):
> Thence running forth unto her loved Lord,
> She unto him recounted all that fell:
> Who ioyning ioy with her in one accord,
> Acknowledg'd for his owne faire Pastorell.

[3]. . *Q.* 6. 9. 32. 1-2.

[33]*F. Q.* 6. 9. 11. 6-9,12. 1-3. Note that both 'blind boy' and 'the bird' reappear in Benedick's teasing jects: 'Now you strike like the blind boy' and 'Alas, poor fowl!' and 'The flat transgression of a school-boy, who, being overjoyed with finding a bird's-nest, etc.

[34]*F. Q.* 6. 1. 3. 8-9, 6. 9. 9. 1-4.

[35]*F. Q.* 6. 10. 23. 7-9.

[36]*F. Q.* 6. 10. 26. 7-9, 6. 10. 27. 1-2. *Cf.* Benedick: 'Till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace.'

[37]*Spenser and 'Much Ado About Nothing,' Studies in Philology* (April, 1940), 225-35.

[38]*F. Q.* 2. 4. 7. 4-9.
[39]*F. Q.* 2. 3. 46. 5-6.
[40]*F. Q.* 2. 3. 20. 2, 21. 3.
[41]*F. Q.* 2. 3. 36. 1, 5-9.
[42]*F. Q.* 3. 12. 6. 1-2.
[43]The boy sent after the book in act 2, scene 3, never comes back, and seems to have no relation to the plot. We are tempted to think of him as a hangover from some other situation. Might he be a reminiscence of the fanciful and lovely boy of the Mask? Or of the little boy Amnestes, who seeks for what is lost or laid amiss by Eumnestes? *F. Q.* 2. 9. 58. 4.
[44]*F. Q.* 1. 9. 10. 1-5. The best explanation I know of Benedick's laughing 'ah, ha, he!' when the wedding of Hero and Claudio is frustrated.
[44a]*F. Q.* 2. 8. 18.
[45]*F. Q.* 2. 8. 42. 1, 4, 8.
[46]*F. Q.* 6. 8. 12. 1-4.
[47]The discourteous Turpin had been hung up by the heels upon a tree, that the picture of his punishment might serve for example. *Cf.* Benedick's early bravado: 'Let me be vilely painted,' etc.

HAMLET AMONG THE MECHANISTS

By ARTHUR M. SAMPLEY

OF all Shakspere's important plays, I suppose that *Hamlet* has been handled most roughly by recent critics. Charlton M. Lewis[1] and J. M. Robertson[2] have tried to show that Shakspere took the actions of his hero from an older play without adapting the thoughts of the protagonist to his conduct. Professor Elmer Edgar Stoll asserts that Shakspere himself had no explanation of Hamlet's delay and that Hamlet's references to procrastination are merely the dramatist's artifices in bridging over gaps of inaction in an irrational plot.[3] Accepting the conclusion of Robertson and Stoll, Mr. T. S. Eliot goes even further and declares that "the play is most certainly an artistic failure."[4] Mr. Eliot follows Robertson in assuming that the tragic emotion in *Hamlet* is the attitude of a son toward a guilty mother, but he finds that the cause is not sufficient for the feelings which are produced. Hamlet, he declares, "is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in excess of the facts as they appear."[5]

The trend of *Hamlet* criticism in the last twenty-five years has gone to as great an extreme in making Hamlet a mechanical puppet of the author as nineteenth-century criticism went in making him into a living being independent of his creator. The time has come, I think, for a remonstrance. In the following pages I shall attempt to point out what I consider to be the errors in logic which have led to the present mechanistic view of Hamlet. If I have singled out Stoll, Lewis, Robertson, and Eliot for particular attention, the reason is that these critics have been especially influential on modern critical opinion.[6]

The concept of Hamlet which has been presented by Professor Stoll has gained rather wide acceptance, but though not wholly wrong, it seems to me so fragmentary and distorted that it should be answered in detail. Fundamentally Professor Stoll's concept is that Hamlet is not irresolute, that there is no tragic flaw in his character, that

he is a victim of fate and circumstances rather than inner conflict; thus the play as a whole is merely another example of the revenge tragedy and presents a hero who, through skillful counterplots, and resolute action, overcomes his opponent in the end. The arguments advanced for this thesis will be examined and answered in detail.

First, Professor Stoll alleges that an Elizabethan audience, used to the revenge plays and particularly to the stage-worn plot of *Hamlet,* would not have understood an irresolute hero.[7] Other Elizabethan revengers, according to this view, delay and reprove themselves, and in their cases no one argues that there is inner conflict or vacillation. In reply it may be said that Shakspere differed from Kyd and Marston in the difference of genius from talent; it does not follow, then, that his treatment must be identical with theirs; had it been so, we should never have studied him so closely. Again Kyd's and Marston's heroes delay for adequate external causes, but the external causes surrounding Hamlet are insufficient. Moreover, Hamlet is the only one of the avengers to deal in self-analysis. Finally, it is a delusion to believe that Shakspere ever supposed that the average Elizabethan audience understood more than half the poetry or two-thirds of the characterization in his plays. Indeed Hamlet's speech to the players is strong evidence to the contrary. We can hardly doubt that Shakspere is here speaking his own views, and the man who thought the groundlings "capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise" can hardly have written his masterpieces for this intellectual level only. For them, of course, he put in the cannon shots and the ghost roving under the stage, but he wrote in also poetry and strokes of characterization for the judicious, whose censure should "o'erweigh a whole theatre of others." It is, therefore, a fallacy to assume that Shakspere wrote only for the groundlings. Take, for example, Macbeth's speech on hearing of his wife's death: following the reasoning of modern critics, we should have to say that the crude Elizabethan audience could not have understood it; that therefore Shakspere could not have meant it; and that any depth of philosophy or beauty of verse in the passage must have been imagined into it by the nineteenth-century critics.

Professor Stoll realizes that the soliloquies in Act II and Act IV reveal Hamlet as reproaching himself for his delay, but he holds that these self-reproaches are introduced only to bridge over gaps in the action and are not really grounded in character.[8] Elsewhere Professor Stoll states that they serve as "reminders to the audience that the undertaking has not been forgotten" and as "indications of . . . its momentous and formidable nature."[9] Moreover, these self-reproaches conceal the weakness of the plot, namely, that the revenge must be postponed to the end of the play.[10] But the audience does not need to be reminded that Hamlet has not forgotten, if, as Professor Stoll insists, Hamlet is resolute throughout and if the audience is clearly to understand that Hamlet, even as he criticizes himself for delay, is being very active in determining whether the ghost is the devil trying to deceive him. As to the argument that the self-reproaches conceal the structural weakness that the revenge must come at the end, the answer is that they do not conceal it at all; they call attention to it. In drama, as Shakspere well knew, the best way to conceal a weakness is to avoid mentioning it. Thus in *The Merchant of Venice* the theater audience never perceives the difficulty of the missing three months because the dramatist does not mention it. Moreover, if Shakspere had wished to gloze over the inaction of the hero in Act II, he had only to devote the entire "Now I am alone" soliloquy to Hamlet's doubts as to the veracity of the ghost. Then indeed we should have had no mystery in Act II. The omission of the final soliloquy and of the ghost's reproof would similarly have clarified Act IV. But Shakspere fails to follow either of the courses for concealing weakness; on the contrary he has his hero puzzle over the matter and mention numerous reasons for his delay. Elsewhere Professor Stoll insists that we take the plain, simple meaning of the text of the play; then why should we not follow the same policy for the self-analytical soliloquies? We ought not to seek to explain away whatever does not fit our own theories; we ought rather to fit our interpretation to the text.

Professor Stoll seeks to establish that Shakspere is following a convention in having the hero reproach himself for

delay by showing that in *The Spanish Tragedy* Hieronimo is accused by Bel-Imperia and Isabella of remissness and that in one passage he appears to reprove himself.[11] The instances, however, are not at all parallel. Hieronimo does not in his moments of sanity reprove himself. In an insane fit he mistakes an old man for the ghost of Horatio and inquires whether the ghost has not returned to plague his father for being remiss in seeking revenge. Bel-Imperia and Isabella, it is true, reproach Hieronimo, but they do so unjustly, since they are not in possession of the facts. Moreover, when Hieronimo is directly accused by Bel-Imperia of delay, he in effect denies the charge.[12] If there is any delay, it is abundantly explained on two grounds made quite clear in the play: (1) that Hieronimo fears that Bel Imperia's letter informing him of the identity of the murderers is a trick; (2) that Hieronimo, shortly after learning the truth, goes mad. Hamlet, however, delays when there are no satisfactory external causes; Hamlet, unlike Hieronimo, reproaches himself at length on two separate occasions and does so while in full possession of his faculties. Hamlet, unlike Hieronimo, analyzes his own mind and lists several internal or psychological reasons for his delay. Moreover, Hamlet, unlike Hieronimo, has two foils in resolute young men who are faced with his same problem. The false analogy between *Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy* illustrates a danger of the historical method. One cannot explain a great piece of literature by a similar but primitive composition, particularly when the element of greatness is the very point under consideration.

In Hamlet's self-reproaches, according to Professor Stoll, none of the motives which Hamlet mentions "fit his noble nature."[13] This is certainly a matter of opinion. They do not, it is true, fit Professor Stoll's concept; but Coleridge found them apposite, and Bradley succeeded in fitting them all into an ordered interpretation.

Professor Stoll dwells also upon the fact that Hamlet mentions his delay in only two of the soliloquies.[14] But Hamlet speaks only five soliloquies after Act I; two of them are brief, and in the "To be or not to be" passage he definitely alludes to an inner conflict, if not, as quite possibly, to

his delay. Yet keep the statistics as given, we discover that on two out of five possible occasions Hamlet reproaches himself with delay. Moreover, in the five soliloquies there are 166 lines, of which 95 are taken up with discussions of his delay. In other words, considerably over half of the lines which Hamlet speaks alone after Act I deal with his delay. Much is made by Professor Stoll of the fact that for two centuries after the production of *Hamlet* no one found any tragic flaw in the nature of the hero.[15] Now this statement seems to mean a great deal more than it really does. In the first place, we do not know how the seventeenth century interpreted *Hamlet*.[16] The first criticism of any length occurs in 1699. Professor Stoll believes that he knows how the Elizabethan audience interpreted the play, but, after all, he can only guess, as there were no dramatic reviews in those days. Furthermore, as I have already pointed out, the Elizabethan audience, drawn from various cultural levels, probably interpreted the play differently. Nor does the dramatic tradition tell us much after the eighteen years of Puritan *interregnum,* even if one were disposed to draw any weighty inferences from the garbled texts of the Restoration Stage. The plain fact is that we may have opinions about how the seventeenth century interpreted *Hamlet,* but neither Professor Stoll nor anyone else actually knows.

As to eighteenth-century interpretation of *Hamlet,* the first part of this century was an era when Shakspere was patronized by second-rate writers. He was, it was generally believed, a popular dramatist, possibly a crude sort of genius, but a careless poet and a breaker of rules. It was the fashion then to underestimate him.[17] It is, of course, true that it was not until 1780 that Henry MacKenzie perceived an inner conflict in the character (rather less than two centuries by any count), but Hamlet's unnatural delay was in fact commented upon by Sir Thomas Hamner in 1736; to him at least the melancholy Dane did not seem an example of resolute action.

It may be seen, then, that the first two centuries of *Hamlet* criticism prove very little. Professor Stoll, however, has additional evidence. He argues that in rewriting a familiar revenge play Shakspere would not have given the hero's

character an entirely new turn for which the audience was not prepared.[18] Are we then to infer that Shakspere added nothing to the characterization in such familiar stories as those of *King John* and *Julius Caesar*? Not only did Shakspere alter the characterization in almost every story that he touched; he also frequently changed details of the plot and even transformed the familiar comedy *King Lear* into a bitter tragedy. There is no record that the Elizabethan audience rebelled.

Again it is held that an irresolute hero is an Elizabethan anomaly, and Professor Stoll will not allow only one example of anything in Elizabethan drama.[19] We may grant, of course, that there is only one Hamlet, but there are other irresolute heroes—Marlowe's Edward II, Shakspere's Richard II and Antony, and Beaumont and Fletcher's Philaster[20] and Arbaces. There were also irresolute human beings in Shakspere's day; the Earl of Essex is a notable example.

Professor Stoll further argues that Hamlet delays killing Claudius in Act II because he fears that the ghost may be the devil.[21] This is in fact one reason which Hamlet gives for his delay, but it is only one of six reasons. That doubt of the ghost's word in itself is not enough to account for his delay is indicated by the bitterness of Hamlet's self-reproaches in the very soliloquy in which he plans the play to entrap the King. If he has a valid reason for delay, why should he blame himself? Hamlet does doubt the ghost's word, but he doubts himself more. So his questioning of his own courage and of his ability to shake off melancholy reflection and empty talk becomes inextricably intermingled with his suspicions of the ghost. Anyone who has ever faced a difficult decision knows that it is impossible at times to disentangle objective and subjective reasons. Hamlet decides to present the play because he hopes that by ridding himself of one doubt he may then be able to master the others.

Professor Stoll maintains that throughout the play Hamlet's conduct is resolute.[22] Thus Hamlet stabs Polonius, sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their doom, escapes,

returns to Denmark, and finally kills Laertes and the King. Now I do not propose to fall into Professor Stoll's error and ignore this evidence or attempt to explain it away. Part of the time Hamlet is resolute. But Professor Stoll maintains that there is no middle ground; he insists that Hamlet is either resolute or irresolute, that he cannot be both. But the facts are that Hamlet delays in Act II, that he is usually resolute in Act IV, that he delays at the beginning of Act V, that he is resolute at the end of Act V, and that in several passages he reproves himself for delaying. An unbiased reading of the play will, I believe, demonstrate the accuracy of these statements.

So far I have attempted only to answer Professor Stoll's arguments; there is, however, further evidence to be considered.

That Hamlet is a victim of inner strife has been the view of the great critics since the latter part of the eighteenth century. Men as diverse in nature as Coleridge, Hazlitt, Goethe, Schlegel, and Bradley have held this view; they are, moreover, men who brought to the play not only careful study but minds of extraordinary clarity and grasp. Nor was their point of view unusual; it was the interpretation of nearly all cultured readers and audiences of the nineteenth century. Now this view may not be the complete one; it may represent only one phase of the character; but it was not invented out of thin air. It is in the play, and these critics quoted line and incident to support their views.

But let us not be convinced by either eighteenth- or nineteenth-century critics. Let us examine the text of the play, and if we apparently elucidate the obvious, the reason is that the obvious has recently been removed by dialectic prestidigitation.

First of all, in the simple matter of plot Hamlet does delay. Two months elapse between the appearance of the ghost and the opening of Act. II. Shakspere, moreover, emphasizes the passage of time; in some of his plays, as in *Othello,* there are mixed time references; here they agree. The mission of Reynaldo, the return of the Norwegian am-

bassadors, the summons of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Ophelia's statement before the dumb show that four months have elapsed since the death of the elder Hamlet—all point to a passage of time of approximately two months in which Hamlet has done nothing.[23] Then beginning with the presentation of the play before Claudius there follows a period of activity. Hamlet's failure to kill the King at prayer is a missed chance, but not—and here I agree with Professor Stoll—a sign of irresolution. His voyage to England, moreover, is notable for action. But with his return to Denmark there is another delay, all the more dangerous because he knows now that the King is thoroughly roused.

These are the facts, and they have not been explained away. In themselves they present a character who alternates between vacillation and energetic activity. Let us see how the dialogue bears out this conduct.

First, as we have seen, Hamlet reproaches himself for his delay. In two long soliloquies he blames himself bitterly and analyzes the causes of his failure. He lists five possible causes of his conduct: cowardice, a tendency to unpack his heart with words, the fear that the ghost may be a devil, bestial oblivion, excessive thought, and he adds finally that he does not know exactly why he has delayed. Now whether one or all of these be truly the source of Hamlet's delay, they do give evidence of inner conflict, of tragic weakness. They support, furthermore, the evidence of the plot.

Professor Stoll makes much of the fact that no other character accuses Hamlet of delay.[24] There is such a character, however. The ghost, who knows the facts better than anyone else, returns to upbraid Hamlet because of his "almost blunted purpose."[25] This statement of the ghost has caused a good deal of puzzlement, since Hamlet has just killed Polonius under the impression that he was the King, but Shakspere would never have put these words in the ghost's mouth if he had believed that Hamlet had thus far been acting with proper dispatch. As for the other characters in the play, only Horatio knows the full facts, and he also refers to Hamlet's delay in Act V. On learning from Hamlet the fate of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, he remarks rather pointedly:

> It must be shortly known to him from England
> What is the issue of the business there.

Hamlet dismisses the reminder, but how nearly he came to failure is revealed when in the closing lines the ambassadors from England appear. Their arrival can be introduced only to show by what a small margin Hamlet consummated his revenge. It looks as if Shakspere were underlining the delay of Hamlet.

Furthermore Hamlet's inaction is contrasted with the resolution of Laertes in seeking revenge for his father's death and with the warlike forthrightness of Fortinbras in regaining the land lost by his parent. Fortinbras does in fact seem brought in mainly as a foil to Hamlet; certainly the latter regards him as an example of what a resolute young man should be and of what Hamlet is not. This use of contrast is quite Shaksperian; we have only to think of Romeo and Paris, Hal and Hotspur, Brutus and Cassius. Moreover, it is in Shakspere's manner to present the same plot motif in varied forms in the same play; thus in *King Lear* he has two deceived fathers and contrasts Lear's real madness with Edgar's assumed insanity.

I think, then, that it is clear that Hamlet did delay, that he was conscious of his procrastination, and that Shakspere means to show that the final tragedy is in a measure Hamlet's fault. I believe, too, that sufficient evidence has been presented to show that Hamlet is the victim of inner conflict. His mind throughout the play is torn by disillusion, pessimism, and melancholy. It is this concept of Hamlet which is the most constant. From the very moment when he reveals himself to the audience in the somber and unforgettable words, "O that this too, tóo solid flesh would melt" unto the majestic "Absent thee from felicity awhile" we have one vision, and it is not that of a resolute plotter. It is rather that of a tremendously vital soul stung to the verge of distraction—a tortured and harassed spirit losing himself at times in melancholy reflection, at times in vitriolic words, but retaining enough of his native energy and intelligence to cope with and finally to overcome a dangerous adversary.

II.

Hamlet, then, is both resolute and irresolute—a character of conflicting actions. It is this apparent inconsistency that has lent credence to a theory developed by Charlton M. Lewis[26] and J. M. Robertson.[27] According to this theory the inconsistencies in Hamlet's conduct are to be attributed to the fact that Shakspere had inherited from Kyd the illogical behavior of Hamlet and that he was unable to make the hero of the old revenge story into a completely consistent person.

This too easy critical position overlooks, in the first place, the fact that the inconsistency in Hamlet's character is considerably greater in the study than on the stage. It is too often forgotten that a dramatist has to interpret his story in flashes of dramatic excitement, not in the careful analysis that is appropriate in a novel. As a good dramatist Shakspere knew that perfect consistency in details was not so important as the intensity of the individual scene. Shakspere worked in broad, bold lines, and when we examine his details too closely, they seem incoherent and clashing. But if we view him in the medium for which he was writing —the stage—, then, either in his day or our own, we see him in the right perspective; the conflicts become only heightened lights of contrast, and people emerge who are as real and vital as any we have known.

But more important than this consideration is the fact that Lewis and Robertson involve themselves in inconsistencies of their own. Thus they maintain that the Hamlet of the earlier play had good reason for his failure to kill the King, whereas Shakspere's hero has not. Apparently, then, Shakspere gratuitously added difficulties which he could not explain. Here one is moved to ask, why did he bring in the difficulties? If the hero of the *Ur-Hamlet* was prevented from slaying the King by a personal guard, why did Shakspere eliminate the guard and incur the strictures of the critics? There are only two possible explanations: either Shakspere was a bungler or he was interested in the psychology of a character whose failure to act in time led to such tragic conclusions. I believe that all the evidence supports the latter point of view.

Shakspere, I think, must have approached the old play as a modern writer might attempt to dramatize a biography: he sought the underlying significance of his character's behavior. He had inherited a hero who delays for external causes. Even in the old play the delay seems excessive; it teases the imagination. Shakspere attempted to explain it, speaking through the soliloquies of his character. Is it cowardice, a tendency to lose himself in words, bestial oblivion, thinking too precisely on the event? Or is it rather a world-weary mood induced by his father's death and his mother's immoral conduct? Shakspere suggested all of these solutions; he did not insist upon any one. Shakspere knew—and it can be demonstrated from his works that he knew—that human conduct is often the result of a complex of motives so intermingled as to be inextricable.

Thus following his artistic impulse, Shakspere emphasized rather than minimized Hamlet's delay. Thus two of the great soliloquies deal with it directly and a third by indirection. Thus the energetic action of the callow Laertes is played up for contrast. Thus the warlike Fortinbras avenges forthrightly the death of a parent who died in honorable combat. Only Hamlet delays—Hamlet, the finest of them all. The sensitive, the intelligent man goes down in failure while the ruthless succeeds. It is the tragedy of a great soul. It may also incidentally shadow forth the tragedy of our own civilization.

III.

And now I return to Mr. T. S. Eliot's thesis that *Hamlet* is an artistic failure and that Hamlet's emotion is in excess of the facts as they appear.[28] I cannot help feeling that the first statement must have been prompted by a too recent reading of Robertson's essay and not by a hearing or reading of the play. At any rate the statement itself needs no refutation; the history of three hundred years controverts it sufficiently. But the statement that Hamlet's emotion is in excess of the facts, though likewise erroneous, as I believe, deserves more careful consideration. Had Mr. Eliot made such a statement of *Timon of Athens,* it would have been true enough; had he made it of certain speeches of

King Lear, it would have been at least partly correct. There are in Shakspere, as Mr. Eliot suggests, some dark thoughts and broodings which he places inappropriately at times in the mouths of his characters. As Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith wisely remarks, the speeches of Lear and Timon against the mere fact of sex "sound like the incoherent ravings of an unbalanced mind, driven to madness by a loathing for men and women in their natural intercourse together."[29] Thus Mr. Eliot is, I think, partly right about Shakspere's use of emotion in excess of the facts, but the statement does not seem to me appropriate to *Hamlet,* for in that play the facts which the hero faces are sufficiently maddening to arouse the bitterest of passion. His father, whom he had almost worshipped, has been treacherously murdered by a trusted brother; his mother, whom he had dearly loved, has committed adultery, incest, and perhaps murder; his sweetheart has yielded to the commands of a worldly-wise, suspicious parent and refused to see him; the court of Denmark has revealed itself as hypocritical, drunken, and corrupt; his former friends become the tools of his enemies. These wrongs, none of which is trivial and all of which fall on an unusually sensitive heart, are certainly sufficient to drive a man to distraction. In these circumstances there is no gall that seems too bitter for Hamlet's tongue, no vitriol that is too mordant. For the tragedy of Hamlet is that of a great and sensitive soul burdened again and again with undeserved misfortune until at last the mind can endure it no longer but turns against the world in complete revulsion.

Thus the attitude of Hamlet is critical; it is the one unifying thread in this diverse character. He reviles his mother, scolds his sweetheart, ridicules Polonius, contemptuously flouts the King, condemns the Danish drunkenness, lectures the players on their acting and the audience on their taste, badgers and finally kills his former schoolmates, mimics the foppish Osric, and on repeated occasions indulges in the depths of self-scorn. Hamlet is out to avenge himself not on Claudius alone, but on the whole world, and he will do so by flaying them with words.

This, I believe, is in great measure the secret of Hamlet's appeal, for in his general denunciation, he speaks our own

hidden thoughts. We too have seen into the pretenses of the world, have found murder throned, whoredom reverenced, and platitudinous ineptitude regarded as statesmanship. Like Hamlet, we have no recourse except to unpack our hearts with words or engage in the unequal struggle with evils and by opposing end not them but ourselves.

Hamlet, then, is a great play partly at least because it provides an adequate cause for an eloquent character to rail against the world. To storm as King Lear does against his daughters is grief too personal; to rant as Timon does is inappropriate because Timon was even more responsible for his misfortunes than Lear; but Hamlet is the good and intelligent man suddenly confronted with a great crime against himself and against civilization. He has the motive and the cue for passion. He is mankind suddenly become vocal against the ills that flesh is heir to. It is no chance that the most famous passage in *Hamlet* has nothing to do with the revenge theme. The heart of the play—I almost said of Hamlet's mystery—lies in the "To be or not to be" soliloquy. It is the cry of the individual soul against the legions of evil. It is what most of us have felt at some time or another; yet our grievances are not great enough to permit us to surrender to the luxury of a tirade against existence; in us it would be unmanly grief, a will most incorrect to heaven. But in Hamlet it is not so; his cause is great enough to justify the torrent of his passion. Reading him, we luxuriate in his bitter cry against human injustice, even in his longing for death. It would not have done for such a character to avenge the King and live. His sickness is in the soul. The catharsis that makes *Hamlet* a great tragedy is the necesary ultimate of such bitterness against life. His final speeches are in effect a summation:

> Absent thee from felicity awhile
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain.

IV.

It is well to listen to all the critics, but in the end we must return to the play. Does Hamlet delay? No one is in a better position to know than Shakspere, whose answer through the lips of his main character is unmistakable. The

soliloquies in Act II and Act IV alone are sufficient to clinch the matter. Only by ignoring or attempting to explain away these passages can a critic make out a case for Hamlet as a resolute character. Shakspere has indicated clearly that Hamlet does delay, and he has, I think, answered clearly enough the question, *Why?* Thus he suggests that Hamlet is a coward (not a physical coward, of course), that he loses himself in words, that he fears that the ghost may be the devil, that he does not wish to send the King to heaven while the latter is praying, that he suffers from bestial oblivion, that he is hindered by the craven scruple of thinking too precisely on the event. These statements are all in the play, and there is no good reason for completely rejecting any of them. The trouble in *Hamlet* criticism has come from the critics who wished to seize on *one* reason as the cause of Hamlet's delay. But that method of criticism is revision rather than interpretation.

Let us assume that Shakspere knew what he was doing, that he meant what he wrote. He has given six reasons for Hamlet's delay. Perhaps not all of these six are equally influential, but all of them (according to Shakspere) had their effect. And why not? Is a dramatist limited to one motive for each character? Surely any such idea is a gratuitous assumption of those who seek a common denominator of all human conduct.

Shakspere has here given us the same complexity of motives that we find in life. The result is a character who, as Professor Ernest Hunter Wright has suggested,[30] has the depth, the three-dimensional quality of a living man. There can be no final interpretation of Hamlet, because each reader will differ somewhat in the relative value which he assesses for each of the six reasons given by Shakspere. And therein lies one of the chief charms of the play. Each reader discovers a Hamlet of his own. Fortunately, therefore, no critic can by a final word put an end to *Hamlet* criticism.

Shakspere's art, after all, is inclusive. In characterization, as in plot structure and poetry, his work, as it matures, becomes more complex. There are many elements in Ham-

let's character: the delay is one; revenge is another; but these are not all. Indeed it may be questioned whether for Shakspre these matters were not really subsidiary to a mood of outraged idealism. The impact of a series of cruel injuries falls on a sensitive spirit, crushing but not entirely destroying its native resolution. The first and strongest impression which Hamlet leaves is world-weariness, complete disillusion. This is an attitude into which all thinking people at some time fall. Hence the play sharpens into bold relief one of the darker moods of man. *Hamlet* is thus more than a play; it is a mood, a way of feeling; it is a chapter, somber but not without triumph, of the agony which the human spirit inevitably endures.

North Texas State Teachers College,
Denton, Texas.

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[1]*The Genesis of Hamlet* (New York, 1907). This volume anticipates Robertson and Stoll by twelve years and contains many of the arguments which they later advance.

[2]*The Problem of Hamlet* (London, 1919).

[3]*Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study, Research Publications of the University of Minnesota,* VIII, No. 5 (Minneapolis, 1919); *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 90-137; *Shakespeare and Other Masters* (Boston, 1940), pp. 121-189.

[4]*Selected Essays, 1917-1932* (New York, 1932), p. 122.

[5]*Ibid.*

[6]The general conception of Hamlet as a resolute avenger is to be found in R. M. Alden, *Shakespeare* (New York, 1922); W. Roy McKenzie, *Hamlet as a Man of Action, Washington University Studies, Humanistic Series,* X, No. 1 (St. Louis, 1922), 103-141; J. W. Draper, *The Hamlet of Shakespeare's Audience* (Durham, 1938); Hazelton Spencer, *The Art and Life of William Shakespeare* (New York, 1940). For a reaction against this concept of Hamlet see Robert M. Smith, "An Agnostic Life of Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Association Bulletin,* XV (1940), 75-87.

[7]*Art and Artifice in Shakespeare,* p. 94.

[8]*Ibid.,* pp. 94-95. See also Charlton M. Lewis, *The Genesis of Hamlet,* pp. 108-109.

[9]*Shakespeare and Other Masters,* p. 157.

[10]*Ibid.,* pp. 158-160.

[11]*Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study,* pp. 15-17.

[12]IV. I. 30-45.

[13]*Art and Artifice in Shakespeare,* pp. 97-98.

[14]*Ibid.,* p. 98.

[15]*Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study,* pp. 7-13; *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare,* p. 109; *Shakespeare and Other Masters,* pp. 186-187.

[16]Professor Robert M. Smith also notes the danger in the assumption that "generalizations upon fragmentary data of the age can tell us how the contemporary audience interpreted Hamlet." See "An Agnostic Life of Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Association Bulletin,* XV (1940), p. 85.

[17]Professor R. W. Babcock writes, "During the earlier period, from 1660 to 1730, the traditional objections to Shakespeare generally held sway"—*The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry, 1776-1799* (Chapel Hill, 1931), p. 3.

[18]*Art and Artifice in Shakespeare,* p. 111. See also Charlton M. Lewis, *The Genesis of Hamlet,* p. 87.

[19]*Art and Artifice in Shakespeare,* pp. 116-117.

[20]See Daniel Morley McKeithan, *The Debt to Shakespeare in the Beaumont-and-Fletcher Plays* (Austin, 1938), pp. 32-34, and Donald Joseph McGinn, *Shakespeare's Influence on the Drama of His Age: Studied in Hamlet,* (New Brunswick, 1938), pp. 55-63. Dr. McGinn discusses no less than eight vaccillating heroes who show the influence of Hamlet.

[21]*Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study,* pp. 47-51; *Shakespeare and Other Masters,* pp. 166-168. See also George Lyman Kittredge, ed., *Hamlet* (Boston, 1939), pp. xi-xiv.

[22]*Art and Artifice in Shakespeare,* pp. 122-123.

[23]Professor Stoll (*Shakespeare and Other Masters,* pp. 147-148) says that these time indications constitute only an example of "free treatment of time" and that "otherwise (as for dramatic interest we should) we receive the impression that Hamlet has gone almost immediately to work at his deception." This seems to me to be saying in effect that if Shakspere had not written the play as he did, we might suppose that Hamlet had not delayed. Certainly where there are no contradictions, the text should be taken at face value.

[24]*Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study,* pp. 22-24; *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare,* p. 112; *Shakespeare and Other Masters,* p. 169.

[25]Professor Stoll states (*Shakespeare and Other Masters,* p. 174) that the ghost's reproof is a reminder to the audience, causing them to focus attention "on the main business and isue, now that the hero 'must to England.'" But the audience no more than Hamlet needs to be reminded of revenge; have we not heard the hero proclaim over the dead Polonius, "I took thee for thy better"?

[26]*The Genesis of Hamlet* (New York, 1907).

[27]*The Problem of Hamlet* (London, 1919).

[28]*Op. cit.,* p. 122.

[29]*On Reading Shakespeare* (New York, 1933), p. 9.

[30]"Reality and Inconsistency in Shakespeare's Characters," *Shaksperian Studies by Members of the Department of English and Comparative Literature in Columbia University* (New York, 1916), pp. 371-401.

SHAKSPERE'S AUDIENCE AS VIEWED BY DOCTOR HARBAGE

By B. Roland Lewis

NOWADAYS, to achieve a reputation as a Shaksperian scholar, paradoxical as it seems, requires that one know far more about William Shakspere and his work than did Shakspere himself. The great English dramatist, as a practicing playwright never halted to make any conscious, critical analysis of his own audience in the theatre: he merely wrote for it. Dr. Alfred Harbage, on the contrary, in his illuminating *Shakespeare's Audience*[1] has given an insight into Shakspere's Elizabethan theatre public heretofore not conceived—least of all conceived by that playwright himself.

To the task in hand, the author brings to heel the most scholarly and the most reliable studies yet made by experts in the factual evidence bearing upon so elusive a subject. Critical studies of wages, of occupations, of public proclamations, and of official attitudes—all concerning Shakspere's London—are scrutinized and utilized. Reliable studies of population, of economic surveys, of the various competing forms of public entertainment, of admission prices, and of social conduct of the day are, likewise, brought to bear upon the subject. Henslowe's *Diary,* accorded a new critical study, is re-interpreted in the light of the other collected factual material concerning an Elizabethan theatre audience. Where the well-known previous work in the field by Greg, Lawrence, Sisson, and Byrne leaves off, the critical study of Harbage begins.

With his accumulated factual evidence in hand and with the published work of his predecessors before him, the author has thrown new light on the size (theatre capacity), on the personal and social composition, on the behavior, and on the capacity for esthetic enjoyment of Shakspere's audience. Timely topics these! Doctor Harbage, while he has not clarified everything respecting his problem, has not dodged the disputable issues. With the frankness of the trained

scholar, he asserts (p. 158), "I did not engage to solve the mystery of Shakespeare's audience, and I have not done so."

Utilizing the extant contract for the Fortune theatre which provides, from the given measurements, the amount of available space in square feet, and allowing adequate individual space in square feet for seating in the galleries and for standing in the yard, the author by a simplified process of arithmetic, shows that the gallery accommodation of the Fortune was for 1,526 persons and the accommodation for the yard was for 818 persons—a total maximum capacity for the Fortune of some 2,344. John Corbin's estimate of the same theatre is 2,558.

A re-evaluation by Harbage of the entries in Henslowe's *Diary,* a barometer for theatre attendance in that day, supports the author's estimates of Shakspere's London theatre capacities. If the gallery capacity alone of the Swan was 3,000, as De Witt said of "the largest and most magnificent" of London theatres, and if the gallery capacity of the Fortune was 1,526 plus a standing capacity of 818, making a total of 2,344, then the capacity of the Rose, from Henslowe's entries, was 1,624 for the gallery and 870 for the yard, a total of 2,594. From the *Diary* it is clear that the average daily attendance in the gallery of the Rose was 1,054 in 1595—a little more than one-half its total capacity. Elizabethan London theatres were built for the accommodation of the holiday capacity crowds and not for the accommodation of the small audience at a non-appealing play. Hence the author holds that 2,500 for the Rose, 2,400 for the Fortune, and 3,000 (gallery only) for the Swan are approximate maximum capacities.

Doctor Harbage cites illuminating evidence to show that the prices for theatre attendance—1*d.* (30 cents in modern value) to stand in the yard, 2*d.* (60 cents) to sit in the gallery, and 3*d.* (90 cents) to sit in one of the choicer boxes near the stage itself—were the corresponding popular prices charged for other competing London popular entertainments of the day. Alehouses and taverns where ale could be drunk the afternoon—the fee was 1*d*; a trip of sightseeing on the Thames was 1*d.* and 2*d.*; the cheaper dinners

cost 3*d.*; tobacco was 3*d.* the pipe-load; "following harlots" —drunkenness, harlotry, gambling were current national indulgences scathingly denounced—was "six-penny whoredome" and "six-pennie" damnation"; gambling was as expensive as Lady Luck might determine; bull-baiting, bear-baiting, cock-fighting were at modest popular prices. Accordingly the 1*d.*, 2*d.*, 3*d.* charged for admittance to the public theatres were prices determined somewhat by the commercial prices charged in alehouses, taverns, bawdy houses, and other places of popular amusement which places were in popular competition with the public playhouses and the playhouses with them. Each of these competing attractions was, in that day, commercialized popular, public pleasure. These popular prices pre-determined the somewhat limited social group from which came the majority attendance in the Elizabethan popular, public theatre.

Accordingly it was the guild craftsmen, apprentices, shopkeepers and merchantmen—themselves, their apprentices, and their wives—who were the chief patrons of Shakspere's theatre. These persons had the prevailing popular prices in ready money, were inclined to take a holiday, were rather ideal for a popular price audience before whom an Elizabethan playwright might display his product. Royalty virtually never attended the public theatre; nobility, rather infrequently and never in potential numbers. These could command the services of a dramatic company for a private performance and often did so command. Gentry, professional men, and officers (serving men) attended, but not in appreciably large numbers; the great mass of lower-class, poor people patronized the theatre very seldom. Itinerant captains, soldiers, and others on furlough or those seeking an occasional holiday were an ever-varying small number. It was the middle-class craftsmen and shopkeeper folk primarily who were in the galleries and in the yard in any Elizabethan public theatre performance of a play.

And women, Doctor Harbage cites evidence to prove, formed a part of Shakspere's Elizabethan public theatre audience! Harlots always!—but they were by no means the only women present. Older children and wives of craftsmen, maids, sober-minded matrons of the "more respectable

class" attended in potential numbers. They were an organic part and parcel of the assembled group. Nor did they wear masks: that practice-custom in the public theatre came into vogue with a later date, the Restoration. No one, not even the women themselves, apologized for their presence in the theatre. Truly the Elizabethan playhouse was a popular institution: it was a place of entertainment open to anyone who had in ready money the 1*d.*, 2*d.*, 3*d.* required for admittance. There is not a single visiting foreigner of the day in London but speaks approvingly of the presence of women, of the "fair" of the "more respectable", and of the "finer sort" in attendance at the theatres. The grocer (a craftsman), his wife, and his apprentice, as in Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607), was a representative family group normally in attendance in Shakspere's Elizabethan playhouse.

Moreover, contrary to general belief, Shakspere's audience was rather well-behaved. True, the apprentices indulged in their annual riot on Whitsuntide. Nor did they seek to avoid their traditional clash with the students of the Inns of Court. Craftsmen folk, however, were sober, serious-minded, and reliable. Respectable women in attendance were also modest and decorous. They had paid their 1*d.*, 2*d.*, 3*d.* for admittance to hear and see the play of the afternoon: they wished their entertainment—they demanded it—they got it! Rioting, ill-seeming behavior, distracting disturbance were not conducive to the full enjoyment of a play. Murders and robberies were not usually in the public playhouse. The Elizabethan court records of trials of murders, robberies, and of other criminal activities relegate these crimes to the alehouses and inns and to brothels rather than to any of the theatres. Relatively speaking, the Elizabethan public theatre was a safe place where wholesome middle-class folk could enjoy an afternoon's play with a degree of freedom from riotous and criminal distraction and detraction. Middle-class patronage would coincide with a degree of security, of sobriety, of respectability. True, there were present "punks" (harlots); true, there was "filthiness" (modern petting); true, there was nut-cracking, eating, drinking. These practices, however, were at once

common to most of the Elizabethan public and yet only incidental. Foreigners who attended the playhouses, without exception, do not speak of rioting, of murders, and of detracting rowdyism in Shakspere's theatre. Puritan *clichés,* on the contrary, habitually associated these undesirable disturbances with any sort of attendance at any theatre.

Doctor Harbage makes it quite clear that Shakspere's audience was not generally characterized by the Elizabethan prevailing epithets applied to it by the self-appointed guardians of morals and conduct of the day. Such identifications as "ignorant multitude", "fickle", "lewed", "furious", "groundlings", "ignorant ones", "a motley crew," "plebeians", "illiterate ones", "dull and heavy-witted worldlings", "rude illiterate apes" (Jonson), and "capable of nothing but inexplicale dumb-show and noise" (Shakspere) did not properly characterize and did not correctly identify the Elizabethan playhouse public. Jonson, Stubbs, Nashe, officials, officials' reports, ranting clergymen, Puritan iconoclasts were in the habit of repeating *ad nauseam* the same identical conventional and stereotyped phrases, the detracting *clichés,* about theatres, about plays, about theatre audiences irrespective of the facts and despite the nature of the case. Their conventional *clichés* were ever repeated irrespective of their inept and inaccurate descriptions.

In keeping quite with human nature in all ages, successful Elizabethan dramatists were the ones least critical of their audiences; *un*successful ones were the most critical—captious even. But the successful ones were critical when they failed; unsuccessful ones were less critical when they succeeded. When they did complain, exactly as in the instance of the self-appointed literary-moral critics, these playwrights, too, employed the identical descriptive *clichés.* That the Elizabethan theatre audience was in fact NOT what its habitual deprecators conventionally held it to be is evidenced by the fact that the better, intelligent, wholesome, and well-conducted middle-class folk attended this theatre and by the further fact that the better plays in that day received the better acclaim. The very plays that both scholars

and posterity have come to rate highest are the identical plays rated by the Elizabethan audience for whom directly they were first written.

To Doctor Harbage, Shaksperian scholars are knee-deep in gratitude: he has brought to their attention a quantity of new factual materials bearing upon Shakspere's audience. And yet one critical note to the contrary. Any one who peruses critically *Shakespeare's Audience* can not but sense that the last chapter ("Our Shakespeare and Our Audiences") is, as Doctor Harbage himself asserts, a bit of "personal indulgence." The chapter does not add overmuch to the scholarly value of the volume *in toto*. Indeed, the very first sentence of his second paragraph (p. 158) reads: "I believe that Shakespeare's audience was a large and receptive assemblage of men and women of all ages and of all classes." This general observation is not entirely in keeping with the factual material to the contrary so clearly set forth in his earlier chapters. The entire last chapter appears to be less well-considered than the other chapters of the volume. However, even "personal indulgences" may well be overlooked in so excellent a book as this.

The University of Utah,
Salt Lake City, Utah.

[1]Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience,* The Columbia University Press, 1941.

DID SHAKSPERE MISS THE ROAD TO WARKWORTH?

(A note on *Henry the Fourth, Part Two*)

By A. Barnett Langdale

I.

A FOURTEEN-LINE passage from the first scene of *Henry the Fourth, Part Two,* is curious in several respects. It is a minor storm-center of variant textual opinion.[1] Furthermore, the seeming duplication in the rôles of Sir John Umfrevill and Lord Bardolph in their encounters with Travers suggests that Shakspere became confused in working out his plot. The speculation concerning this ambiguity has been somewhat long and involved.[2] I have been able to find no comment upon another and different kind of confusion resident in the same fourteen lines —the topographical inconsistencies of Travers' journey. Since numerous writers have attributed to Shakspere some subtlety in his descriptions of foreign places,[3] it is significant if the dramatist can be proved to have been ill-informed or careless or carefree in a geographical reference to a region rather close to the Midlands of England.

Before *2 Henry the Fourth* opens, the Earl of Northumberland has sent his servant, Travers, to fetch news of Shrewsbury Battle. The report rendered by that emissary upon his return constitutes the passage in question:

> My lord, Sir John Umfrevill turn'd me backe
> With joyfull tydings; and (being better hors'd)
> Out-rod me. After him, came spurring head
> A Gentleman (almost fore-spent with speed)
> That stopp'd by me, to breath his bloodied horse.
> He ask'd the way to Chester: And of him
> I did demand what Newes from Shrewsbury;
> He told me, that Rebellion had ill lucke,
> And that yong Harry Percies Spurre was cold.
> With that he gave his able Horse the head,
> And bending forwards strooke his able heeles
> Against the panting sides of his poore jade
> Up to the Rowel head, and starting so,

> He seemed in running to devour the way,
> Staying no longer question.
> *Henry IV,* Part 2, I, 1, ll.44-58[4].

The inquiry, therefore, concerns three places, two of which are asserted above, Shrewsbury Battlefield and Chester, and the third, Warkworth in Northumberland, so strongly suggested that question has never been made of Shakspere's intent to indicate Warkworth. Holinshed's *Chronicles,* Shakspere's source for this portion of his history, plainly establishes the earl at the time of the battle: "The earle of Northumberland . . . turned suddenlie backe, and withdrew himself into Warkewoorth castell."[5] The dramatist alludes to "this Worme-eaten-Hole of ragged Stone" where the earl is lying in pretended illness.[6] These words, and every inference that can be drawn from the text, indicate that Shakspere has accepted Holinshed's allocation.

A glance at the map of England will demonstrate a spatial relationship between Shrewsbury Battlefield (some three and one-half miles to the north and one-half mile to the east of Shrewsbury), Chester, and Warkworth (on the Northumberland coast, twenty miles due north of Newcastle) that seems to have been less clear to Shakspere. If a line be projected due north from the battlefield, at the thirty-one mile point, Chester lies six miles to the west; and at the 150-mile point, Warkworth lies forty-five miles to the east.

Shakspere both possesses and reveals a sense of the considerable distance intervening between Warkworth and Shrewsbury. He talks of Rumor flitting

> through the peasant-Townes
> Between the Royall Field of Shrewsburie,
> And this Worme-eaten-Hole, etc.
> *2 Henry IV,* Induction, ll. 36-8.

He also mentions the *posts*[7] needed to convey news from the battlefield; and Travers arrives after being sent out on *Tuesday last,*[8] permitting him a week, at the most, to make what Northumberland imagines to have been a 340-mile round trip.

Actually, of course, Travers did not ride the full 340

miles, because he encountered Sir John Umfrevill and, on hearing his news, turned back for Warkworth. Shortly afterwards, the *Gentleman* (*almost forespent with speed*) rode up to find Travers serenely cantering along what seems to be the direct road for Chester. Shakspere clearly states that the *Gentleman* was rushing from Shrewsbury Battlefield to Chester. It is conceivable that the fugitive might have wandered off the Chester road because of his frantic anxiety, but more specific mention of so dramatic a fact would have been made. There is no hint that Travers set him aright and the *Gentleman* resumes his journey by "bending forwards." Thus Shakspere must intend us to believe that Travers was returning from the direction of Shrewsbury Battlefield along the Chester road.

What should Travers, presumably dedicated to rapid transit, be doing on the Chester road? The point of meeting between Travers and the *Gentleman* cannot conceivably be placed nearer to Shrewsbury than a point some fifteen to twenty miles distant (or else he would have completed the brief remainder of his journey, attained the fountain-head of authority, and reconciled the variant versions of the outcome of battle); and the other implications of the account all tend to push the point of rencontre to a considerably greater remoteness. The direct route, however, from the Battlefield to Newcastle and Warkworth would steadily diverge from the Shrewsbury-Chester road from a point one or two miles beyond the Battlefield. Fifteen or twenty miles out, the two routes would be seven or eight miles apart, no mean distance in Travers' day. The divergence, of course, would increase continually the further one removed from Shrewsbury Field.

Maps of Shropshire in Camden's *Britannia* illustrate the direct Shrewsbury-Warkworth route.[9] The traveller would bear north and east toward Market-Drayton where he would pick up the through highway to the northeast via Stockport and Bradford or Leeds. A short distance north of the Battlefield he would find several minor but convenient lanes that would convey him to nearby Hodnet and Market-Drayton. The route I have indicated was the age-old avenue from Shropshire to the northeast coast, for *Antonine's Itinerary*

shows the Roman Julia Street running north, somewhat to the east of the later site of the battlefield, on to Market-Drayton, and thence to the northeastward.[10] The following of the Chester road, then, would involve Travers in a gratuitous fifteen or twenty miles of additional travel, with the high land of the Luddington and Ukinton Hills to boot.

A small matter has been belabored here with a disproportionate quantity of investigation, supposition and verbiage. Shrewsbury Battlefield is sixty miles away from Stratford-on-Avon, and if special knowledge of Denmark or Italy is to be attributed to Shakspere, one must be on the alert for a recondite accuracy of topographical relationship when Shakspere is at home in his own Midlands. Thus before finding Shakspere to have made a little slip, it has been necessary to close off every alternative explanation with care. If, however, it be agreed that the dramatist has erred in the travels of Travers, an inference of some consequence becomes permissible. Despite the efforts of some modern writers to associate Shakspere with a modern preciosity for topographical allusion, he remains, in at least one instance, as carefree about accuracies of local reference, even concerning regions fairly close at hand, as Marlowe, Heywood, Dekker, or Fletcher.

862 Union Street
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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[1]Compare the passage as it appears in the *New Variorum version of Henry IV (2),* edited by Matthias A. Shaaber, with the same passage in the *Oxford* Shakespeare.

[2]*New Variorum Henry IV (2),* p. 23, f.n.

[3]Two illustrations will establish the point: Violet M. Jeffrey's "Shakespeare's Venice," *Modern Language Review,* vol. xxvii, 1932, pp. 24-35; Jan Stefanssen's "Shakespeare at Elsinore," *Contemporary Review,* vo. lxix, 1896, No. 361.

[4]This and subsequent references to the text follow the linear numbering of the *New Variorum Henry IV (2).*

[5]Holinshed's *Chronicles,* vol. iii, p. 524.

[6]*Henry IV (2),* Induction, ll. 38-9.

[7]*Ibid,* Induction, l. 40.

[8]*Ibid,* I, i, l. 38.

[9]William Camden: *Britannia,* vol. iii (London, 1806).

[10]John Horsley: *Britannia Romana,* appendix.

SHAKSPERE'S THEATRE

By S. A. T.

All scholars who are interested in the development of the English theatre and especially in the theatre in which and for which Shakspere wrote his plays will welcome the first attempt at a synthesis of all hitherto ascertained data bearing on the structure and equipment of the Globe, the world's most famous theatre. The Harvard University Press has just published Mr. John C. Adams's study of the subject in a well-made book entitled *The Globe Playhouse: Its Design and Equipment,* consisting of 464 pages, including six diagrams and ten half-tone pictures, an abundance of valuable bibliographical notes, and selling for $5.00.

Mr. Adams discusses his subject under 47 headings, basing his discussions on minute and critical analyses of the only two surviving building contacts (the Fortune Theatre and the Hope, built in 1600 and 1613 respectively), all available maps and views of Shakspere's London, hints contained in the plays written during the Shaksperian period, De Witt's drawing, the vignettes occurring on the *Roxana* (1632) and *Messalina* (1640) title-pages, as well as the frontispiece of *The Wits* (1662).

It is entirely to Mr. Adams's credit that nowhere is he too positive about his conclusions. He admits that as regards many of the details the extant evidence is insufficient to reach a final judgment. For all that, the patient reader finds himself with a fairly complete and roughly picturable idea of an Elizabethan theatre; whether this is a picture of the Globe is another matter. After all, if the Globe theatre was built from the lumber of the razed Theatre Playhouse, the first theatre built in England, it is reasonable to assume that the plan of the Globe was very like the theatre it replaced, even though in minor details (decorations, interior rooms) it may have departed from it. This is a far more reasonable view than that this Theatre would have been built like the subsequently built Fortune.

For the general reader this book holds almost nothing of interest. Many, very many, of the details discussed have no value even to the professed Shakspere specialist, unless one wanted to rebuild the Globe as a kind of museum. Most readers would probably be annoyed by the seemingly learned discussions of the exact seating capacity of the Theatre, one scholar contending for a total of 1320 (the Fortune, Wallace), another for 2138 (the Fortune, Corbin), another for 3000 (the Fortune, Greg), another for 2344 (the Fortune, Harbage), especially when one of Shakspere's contemporaries (John Taylor) speaks of "three or four thousand" and Fynes Moryson (1617) refers to "many thousands."

Occasionally Mr. Adams is a bit overingenious, as when he argues that when Shakspere refers to his theatre as this "wooden *O*" he had the black-letter *o* (not the oval roman letter) in mind. There is no reason for thinking that the mention of a letter in the alphabet would have brought the image of a Gothic character to the mind of an Elizabethan Englishman. In his application of his findings to the plays Mr. Adams makes assertions and claims which are wholly unjustifiable, as when he says that the show of eight kings in *Macbeth* has heretofore been a puzzle to scholars. Most, if not all, commentators have taken it for granted that the "show" was a procession in the rear-stage, as Mr. Adams explains it. And so with many other points.

Let us conclude this brief notice of a very worthwhile and scholarly work by saying that it has been well-printed, neatly bound, carefully proof-read and thoroughly and accurately indexed. We miss only one thing: a picture of the interior of the Theatre as Mr. Adams sees it in his mind's eye. Such a picture could easily have been made and would have added to the value of the book—especially for young students. Our readers will surely recall that not so many years ago this *Bulletin* carried such a picture, designed by the present writer,—a picture which was so well received by scholars that it was reproduced as a frontispiece of volume two of the late E. H. C. Oliphant's *Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists* (1929) and by the late William J. Lawrence as a frontispiece for his book *Those Nut-Cracking Elizabethans* (1935).